

Vienna Symphony Jazz Project

Pictures at an Exhibition

VSJP- Pictures at an Exhibition

FLIP PHILIPP, ON THIS PROJECT

My take on Pictures at an Exhibition was the outcome of a period of total immersion in the music of Duke Ellington. I had hardly even embarked on the project when it became clear to me that I would have to completely delete Mussorgsky's piano version from my memory to make room for my own interpretation. One of the perils of composing at home is that my children are forever bombarding me with all kinds of questions and shattering my concentration.

Instead of letting this exasperate me, it occurred to me that I could learn from my children and make their mania for questioning the paradigm for my arrangement work. I decided to use the blues aesthetic as my point of departure.

The blues unites the traditional and the modern. It heightens and reflects our mood as we play. Jazz originated from the blues and is all about improvisational freedom within a context of musical form. A Bach fugue complies with certain clear-cut rules; the same is true of the blues. In my work, I tried to treat the melodies of Wagner and Mussorgsky like jazz standards. Every melody of Wagner and Mussorgsky clearly sets forth what chord and scale lie at its heart, and these can be improvised on. Interpretive freedom is the essence and the guiding principle of our ensemble.

From day to day, the interpretation of any given piece will vary as countless shifting influences have an impact on our playing. Our everyday-life as orchestramembers allows limited scope for this freedom since it can undermine the unity and integrity of the orchestra.

Each musician must allow his individuality and his personal view of a piece to be subsumed in the orchestra's collective rendering and must painstakingly follow the conductor and the indications provided by the composer. In orchestral playing there can only be one ideal, which takes precedence over the unique voice of each musician. With this project, I hope to give my fellow musicians a means of rediscovering their originality and their own unique sound.

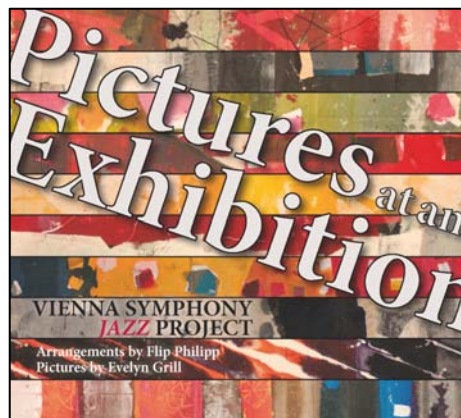
I was thrilled at the idea of incorporating a second art-form, namely the visual arts, into this project. What could be more fitting for a piece like Pictures at an Exhibition? Evelyn Grill's pictorial realization of Mussorgsky's composition is a striking and memorable counterpart to my own musical interpretation.



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Track Listing:

01. First Promenade (1:33)
02. New Wave Gnomus (3:04)
03. Second Promenade (1:09)
04. The Old Castle Blues (3:39)
05. Third Promenade (0:26)
06. Arabian Tulleries (1:59)
07. The Oxcart Late Night & Blue (2:31)
08. Fourth Promenade (0:34)
09. Up-tempo Chicks (1:00)
10. Goldenberg & Schmuyle Rockin' Along (2:19)
11. Black Market Scenes in Limoges (2:26)
12. Eternal Catacombs (1:41)
13. Echoes from the Beyond (1:43)
14. Baba Yaga's Big Drummin' (3:44)
15. The City Gate (3:53)
16. Blues for Tannhauser (10:09)
17. Jammin' Rienzi (8:42)
18. A Night on Bare Mountain (12:01)

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